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# BOSTON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE INDIVIDUAL VERSUS FATE-THROUGH-SOCIETY

IN JOHN GALSWORTHY

by

Elsa Russell (A.B., Boston University, 1926)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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## THE INDIVIDUAL VERSUS FATE-THROUGH-SOCIETY IN JOHN GALSWORTHY

#### I. Introduction.

### A. Statement of the problem.

The main theme in a majority of the works of John Gals-worthy is the individual versus Fate working through society. In both his novels and his plays, we find again and again the central situation is the struggle of an individual or of a class of individuals with Fate through society. Fate takes the form of various aspects of society such as the law, the press, the aristocracy, capital, labor, and wealth. Fate also works in human character through various character traits.

As another has stated the problem:- "The chief characteristic of the author is his ironical perception of the enmeshment of personality in Society's institutions, the struggle of the individual against the mass, or overwhelming majority. The individual of today is so dependent on his surroundings, 'so much a part of the warp and woof of complicated Society', that Society becomes his or her fate, such a fate, as, in the ancient Greek Dramatists, the Gods meted out to mortal man. In most of Galsworthy's works the conflict arises from the rebellion of the individual against Society, some particular case being taken for a typical example."

Although this thesis does not include a study of Fate

<sup>1.</sup> Leon Schalit, John Galsworthy, a Survey. p.219.

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as found in the history of literature, it might be well to add, since a reference has been made to Fate in the Greek dramatists, that in the earlier English novel the idea of chance or luck was connected with the supernatural, in the pelief in a direct superhuman influence, which has been surplanted by science and the explanation of facts by natural - hereditary and social - means.

In this thesis, I propose to study the influence of Fate through society on character in those works containing social and personal elements, and I intend to omit those works which are pure character studies, allegories, phantasies, or artistic portrayals.

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To have a better appreciation of Galsworthy's treatment of the problems of the individual in all its phases, it is necessary to look into his background and life, to study the influences coloring his works.

John Galsworthy, as an individual, was typical of his class, a gentleman of the upper middle class. Born in England, in 1867, of a well-to-do family, he was well acquainted with the type of English gentleman of whom he so often wrote. The late Victorian and Edwardian eras offered Galsworthy a wealth of material upon which to draw. He reveals all the faults as well as the virtues of his contemporaries, their instinctive sense of property, their attachment to form and convention.

Moreover, he emphasizes the social and economic problems of the England of his time.

The Forsyte Saga will probably interpret to posterity the Victorian period which he understood so well. One of his critics compares Galsworthy to the Forsytes in background and character, "being born with a silver spoon in his mouth. His father descended from a long line of farmers, who had lived for generations in South Devon on the edge of the sea. Over the border in Dorset dwelt the imaginary Forsytes. Similarly, his mother belonged to a family long settled in Worcestershire, whose countryside is described in The Freelands. Like the elder Forsytes, John Galsworthy, the Senior, migrated to Lon-

don, where as lawyer and director in many companies he amassed a fortune, showed prudence in delaying marriage until he was well on in middle life, and then fixed his family at Coombe in Surrey.....He was fifty when John was born. To the boy he was always an old man, alert in mind and body, still keeping up his London business at the age of eighty. He was not a cut-and-dried Forsyte like James (Man of Property). He seems rather to have been, with some differences, the prototype in mind and body of the more liberal Old Jolyon, (Man of Property, Indian Summer of a Forsyte)."

This critic carries the parallelism between the Forsytes and the Galsworthys still further by bringing out the fact that, with John Galsworthy's heredity and environment, what he might have become is depicted in the character of Soames Forsyte (The Forsyte Saga; A Modern Comedy), but that his contact with other civilizations saved him.

After the conventional education in private schools and at Harrow and Oxford, Galsworthy did not take up the profession of law which he had studied for, but he did some extensive travelling which brought him into contact with many people and many lands. Although Galsworthy seldom took the scene of action in his works outside of England, he profited much by rubbing elbows with the world.

L. Wilbur L. Cross, <u>Four Contemporary Novelists</u>. p. 104.

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As an individual of upper-middle class society, Gals-worthy was destined to become a lawyer. He did pass the bar and that he knew the law well is shown in several of his plays, notably in The Silver Box, Justice, The Skin Game, and Loyal-ties. But he was more the individual who is led by his instincts than the conventional automaton of society who follows in the footsteps of his father. Although Galsworthy would have made a brilliant lawyer, he would have hated the life of a lawyer and the dryness of the profession.

That he was not compelled to follow a profession which he disliked was due to the fact that he was not obliged to earn his own living. Having an income sufficient to provide him with the necessities of life, he was left free to employ his peculiar faculties in whatever occupational field he saw fit. He chose, therefore, to become a novelist and not a lawyer. Fate then entered Galsworthy's life in the form of money.

Galsworthy's humanitarianism and sympathy for all creatures, both human and dumb, is universally acclaimed by his critics. This quality tempers his works. The following incident, as told by Leon Schalit who has many personal recollections of Galsworthy, illustrates the character of the man. Galsworthy and Schalit were riding in a taxi-cab when the cab stopped suddenly. "Galsworthy grew pale and murmured: 'Someone has been run over.' This is indeed the only time that I have ever seen the writer, who is extraordinarily self-controlled, in agitation; a human life was in question! He got out quickly.

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Through his own carelessness, a man had absolutely run into the cab, and had been knocked down; fortunately nothing serious had happened to him. Greatly relieved, Galsworthy continued the drive."

Galsworthy's creed is well expressed in the motto, which, Schalit tells us is affixed to a small writing table in his home. "I shall pass through this world but once: any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, or dumb animal, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

In conclusion, we learn that Galsworthy's life was in agreement with his ideas. He was a silent benefactor who was tormented by the idea that there was so much poverty and misery in the world. Though he came from a wealthy family and personally never knew financial worries, "he had a deep understanding, a large heart, and an open hand for the unfortunate...He looked on wealth as a mere accident of birth."

<sup>1.</sup> Leon Schalit, John Galsworthy, a Survey. p. 20.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p.23.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p.24.

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II Illustrations attempting to solve the problem.

- A. Certain Novels.
  - 1. Early works.

### Villa Rubein.

In order to appreciate the maturing of John Galsworthy's philosophy, (that is, his idea of the individual battling with Fate working through society), it is necessary to study some of his early works to discover whatever bearing there may be on the later works.

Villa Rubein, a long short-story, written when the author was in his early thirties, is the love story of a young artist of peasant blood and revolutionary spirit, who hates the bourgeois from the depths of his soul, and is a rebel to his finger tips. He encounters many difficulties in winning the hand of a girl of a bourgeois family, but he finally succeeds.

This book is an emotional treatment of the problem of the individual versus his fate in attempting to break through his class into another of higher social standing, a situation which is natural enough when we see in it the spiritual conflict of the author, as if he himself were trying to cut loose from the conventions in which he had been brought up.

Schalit states the main theme of this book well. "In this early work, one of Galsworthy's main ideas is already found: the attempt of the individual to break through the closed ranks of society into the caste barricaded against him; the fight of the individual against the mass, or, at least,

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against the majority. This time the attempt ends in the success of the rebel; in most future cases, however, the individual is broken by the power of the mass."

### The Island Pharisees.

In <u>The Island Pharisees</u>, published four years later than <u>Villa Rubein</u>, we have Galsworthy's first real novel, which is hardly a novel in that it is almost wholly a satirical, analytical, and critical study of society. This first crude attack on society oversteps the mark. "He scathingly hits the hypocrisy and prudery, the bigotry and eccentricity of his compatriots, - their institutions, and customs bad or inexpedient."

He hits every cultured state, not only England.

The plot is that of a young gentleman from the well-to-do class who, having enjoyed the educational benefits of his caste, has his eyes opened by contact with a renegade from a bourgeois family. The main importance of the book is that it is Galsworthy's first rather immature criticism of England's social problems. It shows that he, early in life, recognized the barriers of caste. It is the introduction to all his later novels in which he is concerned with the individual working against Fate in the form of various classes of society.

In connection with the problem of the individual and his Fate working through society, it is interesting to note what

1. Leon Schalit, John Galsworthy, - a Survey. p.35.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p.39.

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Galsworthy himself has to say about kinds of individuals. the preface of the 1908 edition of The Island Pharisees, he says that there are two species of men; "ninety percent of them satisfied, slaves of hapit, non-curious, who go the trodden, secure, easy path of their fathers; . . . the remaining ten are of different kidney, the curious who seek an undiscovered sidepath...put nine even of these come back to the broad road, the tenth (one percent of all) fares on. Nine of these ten curious-courageous go down, and only the toughest, the hundredth, is the successful pioneer who opens up a new road to mankind ... The ninety percent are usually a generation behind the demands of the ten percent minority.", These two elements form two parties, hating each other, and going their own ways. "Now and then however, -but very, very rarely - comes one able to stand between the two: that is, to be objective, to smile at the comicality of the perpetual conflict. . . . This ideal, Galsworthy himself has gradually attained and many of the piased cannot forgive him for it." I may add that in George Meredith's The Egoist, we find this same objective, called the comic spirit, that of seeing in their true relationship characters which are not in harmony with the world.

<sup>1.</sup> Leon Schallt, John Galsworth, a Survey. p. 41-42.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 42

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2. Limitations of certain classes of society.

### a. The Country House.

Only in the early works do we find any signs of immaturity. In <u>The Country House</u>, Galsworthy's ideas have become much more mature than we found them in <u>The Island Pharisees</u>. Galsworthy here has found his field and has achieved a more philosophic view-point.

In this novel, we have the problem of certain individuals representing the traditional aristocracy of the landed gentry struggling with their own limitations, - limitations of tradition and inheritance. In opposition to this class of individuals whose fate is in their caste feeling, we find the adventurous type of individual, and the novel shows the disturbing influence of one on the other. It is the old theme of conservatism versus modernism.

The family of Pendyces are of the landed gentry, faithful to tradition and strong believers in the sacred rights of
caste. Squire Pendyce is the conservative head of the family.
His son, George, has never had to work, and consequently is a
reckless spender and an idler. The mother is the only one in
the family who is democratic, understanding, and refined.
George falls in love with Helen Bellew, an adventurous woman
who is unhappy with her husband and is not living with him.
Divorce proceedings started by the husband nearly lead to a
catastrophy in the Pendyce family. A Pendyce would never hear

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of marriage to a divorced woman, much less to a woman outside his social class. Fate is kind to George, for Helen soon tires of him. It is his mother, however, who brings him back to reason, and smooths things over between Helen and her husband.

The fate of each individual in the book is shown either as a result of his or her character or of a combination of character with social environment. The Squire's ultra-conservatism and pigheadedness are a natural result of his inheritance. He believes that his duty is to carry on the traditions of his fathers. He suffers from a chronic disease called "Pendycitis", whose symptoms are blind stupidity, inflexibility, and strict adherence to tradition. Therein lies his fate.

George's fate is destined to be the same as his father's, but, for a brief moment, he is blinded by the sight of Helen Bellew. He has too much of the Pendyce blood and character to kick over the traces. What would have happened if Helen had not thrown him over is a matter of conjecture. Undoubtedly George does not have strength of character enough to definitely break with his class.

Helen's unfortunate advent into the Pendyce family is a brief interlude in her life. Fate throws George and her together and the inevitable love affair follows. She is not blind to the limitations of George, but neither is she averse to the adventure. She is the type of woman, seen in many of Galsworthy's works, who lures men on by some mysterious power.

In Helen we have the struggle of the individual against

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the closed rank of society. Helen is the rebel and though she does not marry George, she has been a disturbing influence on the Pendyce family. Though the family once more returns to the complacent life on their country estate, "Pendycitis" has received a jolt. Galsworthy leaves his readers satisfied that things are best left as they are, that there is less friction and unhappiness to admit the barriers of caste feeling than to break through them.

Schalit says, in commenting on The Country House, "The contention of many of Galsworthy's critics that at the end of most of his works, the same state of things prevails as at or before the beginning, is not quite correct. In some cases, a purifying process has taken place; in most, his characters have, through their experience, arrived at a discovery if not always a new one; they undergo a certain development, and are not quite the same at the end as at the beginning." This point is a subtle one, and is consistent with the idea that the individual is rarely successful in tempting Fate.

<sup>1.</sup> Leon Schalit, John Galsworthy, a Survey. p. 125.

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### b. Fraternity.

Fraternity is a novel of social contrasts dealing with the problem of the individual versus his fate as a member of the rich or of the poor. In most of Galsworthy's works there is a contrast of classes and in this one we find the cultured rich opposed to the uncultured poor. Galsworthy is particularly interested in the doom of the hyper-intellectual upper class of artistic bent, - whose lives have lost their vitality, have become sterile, but he is also interested in and sympathetic with the fate of the unfortunate proletarians whose lives are definitely influenced by those of the upper class.

The story is of the Dallisons, two brothers, Hilary and Stephen, who are married to two sisters, Bianca and Cecilia. The Dallisons are economically independent, artistically inclined, and bred to such a degree of taste and refinement that their natural instincts have become morbid and abnormal. Their super-culture has gone so far that they are helpless when confronted with the problems of practical life. They write out checks for charity but avoid any personal contact with the lower classes.

In contrast to the Dallisons' world, is the world of the proletarian Hughs. The latter is the shadow of the former and there is continual interplay between the two. Hilary engages as model for his wife a young girl who boards with the Hughs. The coming of this little model into the life of the Dallisons

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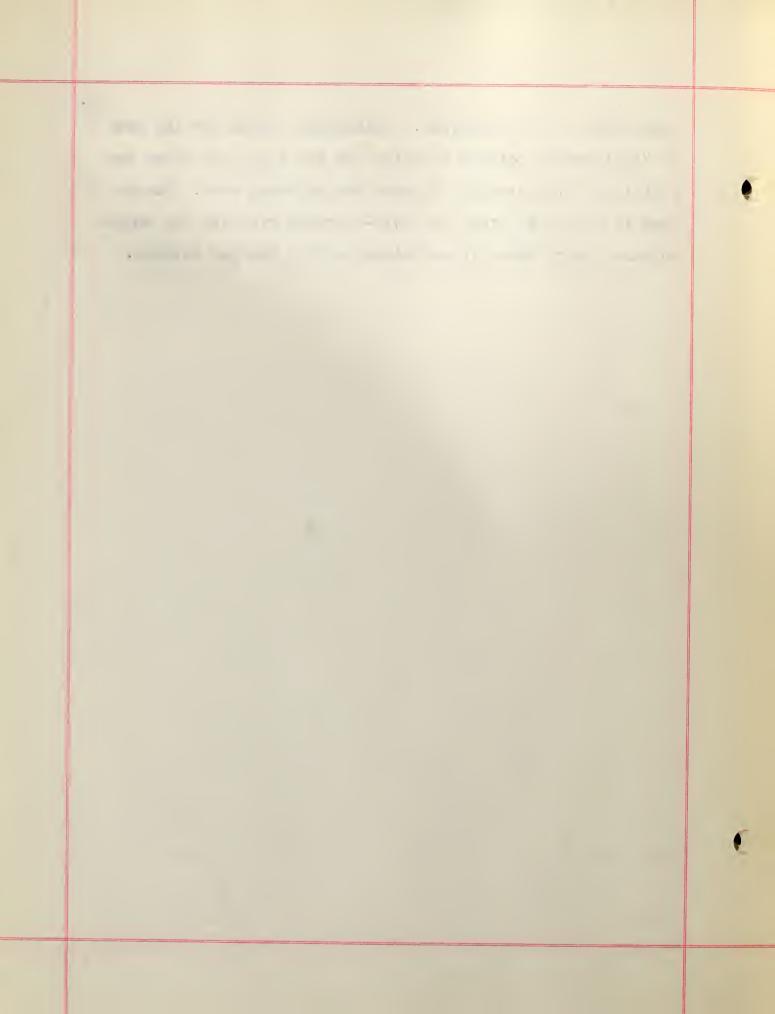
has far-reaching consequences. Hilary falls in love with her, but finds, at the last moment, it is impossible to run away with her. Their worlds are too different. Mr. Hughs is also attracted to the model and when she moves from his house, blames and strikes his wife, indirectly causes the death of his child, and gets a prison term. What a lot of trouble the hiring of the little model caused! Tragedy is the outcome all around.

There is no one individual in this book whose fate is in the balance. Each character is in bond to his own nature and to the culture or lack of culture of his class. Hilary Dallison is beyond help. His fate is the result of his social conscience, which, in turn, is the result of the inbred culture of the upper class of society. He cannot run away with the model, nor can he continue to live with his wife. The fate of Bianca, who even more than Hilary fails to create any positive value, is to be left even more sterile than he. The fate of the Hughs is one of more poverty and misfortune than they started with, all due to the "good" intentions of the Dallisons. The little model is left in poverty and desolation. of each individual is bound up with human character traits which have been formed and carried to extremes by society. In the case of the Dallisons, heredity, education, environment and means breed self-consciousness, and destroy the power of action.

The theme of the book is that all individuals are brothers, but that the barriers of class feeling make brotherhood

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impossible to be recognized. Galsworthy points out the need of "fraternity" between the rich and the poor, but shows the futility of the struggle to make the extremes meet. Though they live side by side, the over-cultured rich and the under-cultured poor, there is no bridge to fill the gap between.



### c. The Patrician.

The Patrician is the only one of Galsworthy's novels which deals with the highest class of society, the aristocracy. It presents the problem of romantic love in opposition to caste feeling. Individuals of the aristocratic class find their own desires opposed by the traditions of their class. They are struggling with Fate working through society, Fate in the form of class traditions of the aristocracy. The individual is forced to choose between being true to his class or becoming a mere man. Human nature is at the root of the conflict between the individual and his fate.

Lord Miltoun, the eldest son of the aristocratic family of Caradocs, falls desperately in love with and wants to marry Mrs. Audrey Noel, the wife of a clergyman. Miltoun thinks that she is divorced. When he learns that she is still married, a struggle ensues between love and his reputation and respectability. He must choose between love and politics. The call to leadership proves the stronger. The traditions of an aristocrat by birth and by nature force the hand of power, and crush the beautiful things of life. Audrey becomes the victim of the patrician code of life.

A similar problem is involved when Courtier, a friend of Audrey's, falls in love with Lady Barbara, Miltoun's sister, though he never tells her of his feelings. These four, Miltoun and Audrey, Courtier and Barbara, are made to suffer because of the patrician will; they have no freedom of action. The two

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who are "outsiders", Audrey and Courtier, leave the scene when they see that it is impossible to break through the artificial "hardness" of the patricians. Both Miltoun and Barbara see that people of a certain social caste are not free to do as they wish. They cannot do what they have never done, nor do without what they have always had.

The essential ideas in the creeds of the patrician. Miltoun, and the champion of lost causes, Courtier, give some light on the problem of the individual versus Fate working through society. The patrician denies freedom to the individual because of lack of faith in human nature, lack of faith in the essential goodness of man, and because of his fear of the crowd. The best man, one of the aristocracy, comes to the top in spite of himself. In other words, the individual's fate depends not on himself but on his being one of the best, that is, one of the highest class in society. If he is an aristocrat, he will rise to power. On the other hand, Courtier believes, not in tradition, but in human nature. All mankind is splendid and is raised through aspiration. The ideal is that you may get to the top not by tracing your ancestry back to William the Conqueror, but by hoping and working. The opposing creeds, both extremes, are, on the one hand, "Blood will tell", or "Might is right", - and on the other, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity for all".

Galsworthy's motto and conclusion to this book is that "Character is Fate", - that all are in bond to their own natures.

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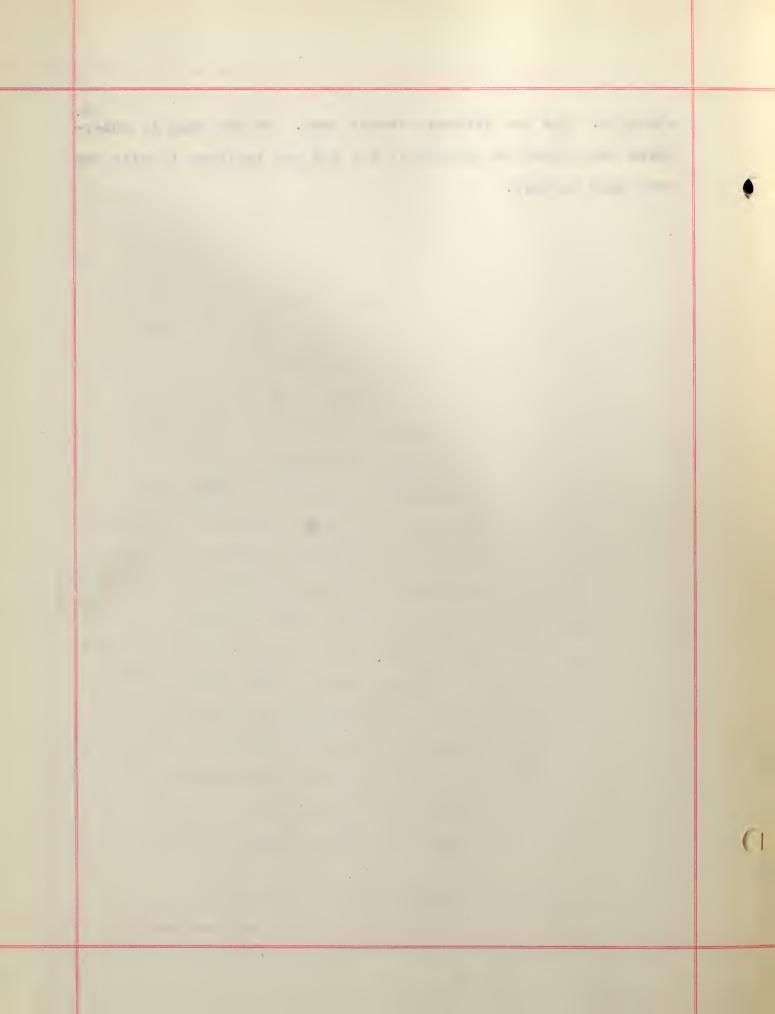
The patricians do their best and are good specimens of their kind. Fate is too much for them. As Courtier asks, "What human spirit could emerge untrammelled and unshrunken from that great encompassing host of material advantage?" The patrician pattern of life is too rigid to allow any freedom of action. The doom of the patrician is in a certain dried-up quality, and in his incapacity to see his defects, which are due to having wielded authority too long. "Character is Fate" and what he most desires, authority, shall in the end enslave him. In his desire for power, he shuts out sympathy and understanding. He finds no peace, and the beauty and rapture of life escape him.

In the last three novels, Galsworthy has pointed out the limitations of certain classes of society, - in The Country

House, the provincial life of the landed gentry; in Fraternity, the artificiality of the hyper-cultured wealthy class; and in The Patrician, the aridness of the aristocracy. In every case he has shown that members of these classes of society are not free to do as they want, that after an attempt and struggle to throw off the shackles, they return to their inherited fate. The individuals of society are bound by both themselves and their environment. Similarly, in the same books, the characters which are in opposition or contrast to these classes of society, after an attempt to break into that society or take from it certain individuals, find themselves voluntarily giving up the

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, The Patrician. p. 180.

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## 3. Saint's Progress.

From a different view-point, Saint's Progress contains the problem of the individual versus Fate working through society. Galsworthy's point of attack is the religious temperament, - and the break-down of religion in England during the World War. He does not attack the Church but rather the stupidity, the unworldliness, the "saintliness" of some of its members. Galsworthy's indictment of the clergy is that a man cannot be a successful priest unless he is a man of the world.

The story concerns Edmund Pierson, a clergyman, and his young daughter, Noel. Noel is in love with a young fellow who is going to war, but her father will not allow them to be married. The outcome is that her lover is killed and she has a "war baby". The background of the World War makes the problem a very moving one. Things are out of proportion. War is a forcing house where plants (passions) grow too fast. Life is simple, elemental, a little mad. These are reasons, excuses if you wish, for Noel's fate. But the world, including her father, condemns her. From the standpoint of society, those who act differently are lost. Sin is doing the different. And society condemns the individual when it is the individual who is a victim of Fate in the form of war.

Noel is a fearless and courageous girl who does not so much mind what the world thinks, as what her father feels.

She gambles with Fate and loses, but does not waste any pity on

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herself. She knows how to keep her end up. Although Noel is a victim of the war, she is so admirable in her courage and in her philosophy, that she is less to be pitied than her father. It is Pierson who is the real victim of the war. Although he is a clergyman, he does not know how to forgive his daughter. Had he been more of a man of the world and less of a saint, he would not have caused Noel so much misery.

The title, Saint's Progress, indicates that Pierson has learned a lesson from his experiences. He has learned that not until things are bravely and humbly met, can there be charity and forgiveness. He begins to see himself for the first time and is never happy thereafter, because he realizes that he has never been a minister to his daughter and to his people in the true sense of the word. The World War, through his own personal experience and his daughter's, has opened his eyes to what his mission really is.

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# 4. The history of the Forsytes.

#### a. The Forsyte Saga.

Galsworthy's fame might rest alone on the praise he has won from The Forsyte Saga. It is generally considered to be his best novel. The value of it lies in a panoramic view of the best days of England's upper middle class during the Victorian era. It is significant for its character drawing, and for its veracity in revealing the virtues and vices of this class of society.

The Forsyte Saga is a trilogy containing The Man of Property, In Chancery, To Let, and the two interludes, The Indian Summer of a Forsyte, and The Awakening. The underlying theme of the volume is that you cannot own human beings, that such ownership leads to disaster. The Forsytes, a large clan of upper middle class English people, represent the pillars of society, the cornerstones of convention, everything that is admirable, but they have their own private peculiarities. They possess in a remarkable degree two qualities which are the real test of a Forsyte, - the power of never being able to give yourself up to anything body and soul, and the sense of property. The book then deals with the conflict between Beauty and Possession.

A bare outline of the story is necessary, in order to see how the sense of property pertains to the problem of the individual versus Fate working through society. Irene, personi-

 fying Beauty, is married to Soames Forsyte, in whom the sense of property is very strong. Irene is a fly caught in a spider's web, and soon leaves Soames for Bosinney, an artist, later marrying another of the Forsyte clan, Young Jolyon, who is less of a true Forsyte than Soames. Soames, never quite forgetting Irene, marries Annette, a French woman, in order to have a son. Fate playfully hands him a daughter, Fleur, and Irene a son, Jon, who are destined to fall in love with each other. Their parents cannot allow them to marry because of the "feud" between the two families, and succeed in separating them, Jon going to America with Irene, and Fleur marrying, as second fiddle, Michael Mont.

Again we have the problem of the individual whose fate is working through society, Fate in the form of the accumulated characteristics and conventions of upper middle class society. There are many victims. Soames Forsyte is represented as a "victim of his own nature, his education, and his environment. He is the embodiment of middle class prejudices, limitations and virtues; he regards everything - including his wife- from the point of view of possession; he has no sense of beauty, no real affection." Young Jolyon has rebelled against his class but is still a part of it. He is not strong enough to break permanently with it.

Outside of the Forsyte clan, but married to it, we have the important character of Irene, important because it is she

1. John W. Cunliffe, - English Literature During the Last Half Century. p.199.

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who disturbs the complacency of the Forsytes. She is, according to one critic, - "one of Galsworthy's most vivid creations. Something individual creeps into the magnetic softness, the passion-haunted quietness, which are characteristic of so many of Galsworthy's women. She is human, and she is in revolt, but not strenuously or effectively.", In contrast, another critic considers Irene a weak character, needing an "Ethel M. Dell hero as a lover." He states that Galsworthy's "one glaring example" of failure to maintain the balance of the scales is in The Forsyte Saga. "Irene refuses to compromise with life herself," (to put up with Soames)," and so she hands on the ban and prevents her only child from ever attaining happiness, thereby giving her whole case away. blames Irene's selfishness for the tragedy which followed, instead of considering her a misfit and the victim of another's selfishness. Concerning the end of the book, this same critic wishes that Galsworthy had let Jon and Fleur marry and goes on to say that "it is the highest possible tribute we can pay to Galsworthy that we care enough about his characters to get really angry when he tries to elicit our sympathies for an unsympathetic, undeserving character.", (Irene).

It is quite obvious that critics are not in agreement on the subject of Irene. I think Galsworthy meant her to be

<sup>1.</sup> Sheila Kaye-Smith, - John Galsworthy. p.60.

<sup>2.</sup> S.P.B. Mais, - Some Modern Authors. p. 5/.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p.5%.

<sup>4.</sup> Ipid. p.62.

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just what she is, the personification of Beauty thrust unwillingly into a world having little or no sense of beauty. She is a victim of Fate in the form or the property instinct.

Jon and Fleur are also innocent victims of the sense of property, that strongest characteristic of the Forsytes. Their parents, Irene and Soames, are too selfish - Irene more than Soames - to let them marry. One critic comments, "Had Galsworthy's irony gone so far as to let them marry, he would have had on his hands a situation most difficult to handle and quite out of harmony with his general design." The last point is well taken. We must understand Galsworthy's design and then realize that it is the irony of Fate that Jon and Fleur should fall in love, and it follows from the closely woven texture, that disaster is to follow. Both Jon and Fleur are victims of the Forsytean philosophy, of its tenacity and of its sense of property.

<sup>1.</sup> Wilbur L. Cross, - Four Contemporary Dramatists. p. 137.

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## b. A Modern Comedy.

A Modern Comedy continues the destiny of the Forsytes, out particularly of Fleur. While in The Forsyte Saga the instinct was to acquire property to hand on to one's children, in addition to the ownership of human beings, in A Modern Comedy the property instinct has shirted, under changing social conditions, from others to one's self. "The Forsytes now desire to own others' souls as their own. They want to live while they live and for themselves alone."

A Modern Comedy, like the Saga, consists of three novels,

- The White Monkey, The Silver Spoon, and Swan Song; and two
interludes, - A Silent Wooing and Passers By. The modern generation is symbolized in a Chinese picture of a white monkey,
from which the first book gets its name. The white monkey has
eaten an orange and is looking at the rinds at his feet with a
puzzled glance, as if to say, - "Now that I've eaten the fruits
of life, I'm not satisfied. I don't know what it is I'm looking for, but I won't be happy till I find it, whatever it is."
This represents the disillusionment of the younger generation
which succeeded the World War.

Fleur Forsyte Mont is the idol of her father, Soames.

Born with a silver spoon in her mouth, she manages to get, like the white monkey, about everything she wants. The only thing she has been deprived of is Jon. Her father, realizing this,

<sup>1.</sup> Wilbur L. Cross, Four Contemporary Dramatists. p. 140.

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but not knowing that he is primarily the cause of it, tries to make it up to her all the rest of his life. Although at first, particularly in The Man of Property, we despise Soames, gradually we grow to like him, and feel in the end that he is a real hero and the most realistic character in the Forsyte family.

Galsworthy shows, in A Modern Comedy, the problem of the individual versus his fate in society. Fleur's liberty is limited by environment and class. Modern though she is, she loses her self-confidence as a result of a libel suit between her and another modern, -Marjorie Ferrar. Fleur thinks she can do as she likes, but finds herself snubbed as morally superior, because she has won the verdict. Her fate is bound up in the traditions and conventions of the upper middle class. The modern generation are no freer from the shackles of society than their fathers were.

Jon Forsyte enters into the story in person in the two interludes and in <u>Swan Song</u>. He is married to an American girl. Fleur's life comes into contact with them and she tries to get what she can out of the life she has missed with Jon, but is not very successful.

This last book is full of Galsworthy's finest philosophy. Soames becomes a really great character, - a champion of independence and "roots". But he comes to this conclusion: - "Did it matter what you did? some way, some how life took you up and put you where it would." After all, he comes around to a

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fatalistic attitude. He reasons further about Fleur and Jon,"It was not Fleur's fault that she loved Jon, only a misfortune."
His own passion which began with Irene and was transmitted into
Fleur is singing its swan song of death.

The last ironic touch in the book, and one of the most moving, is the death of Soames. In saving Fleur from committing suicide when Jon leaves her, Soames is hit by one of his own pictures and dies. The book leaves Fleur rather broken, but one wonders if she will not now adjust herself to life and be happy with Michael. Michael's words at the end of the book give us the author's philosophy of the whole thing, -"It's pretty hard sometimes to remember that it's all comedy; but one gets there, you know." In other words, don't take life too seriously; being steady does it in the long run.

What is Galsworthy's theory of happiness for the individual whose Fate is membership in the upper middle class? His life is molded by not one thing, but many; first, by his character; and second, by his social environment, - that is, social class and the times in which he lives. He gets the most out of life by not trying to take from it more than it offers him; in other words, renunciation, resigning one's self to Fate. There is happiness for individuals as long as they do not tamper with or tempt Fate.

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## b. Maid in Waiting.

Though <u>Maid in Waiting</u> does not give us much light on the problem of the individual versus Fate working through society, there is one conversation which stands out in its philosophical bearing on the problem. It is a conversation between Dinny Cherrell, the "maid in waiting", and her Uncle Adrian.

Dinny asks, " ' Do you think old families are queer?'

'I don't see why. When there's a case of queerness in am old family, it's conspicuous of course, instead of just passing without notice. Old families are not inbred like village-folk.

'Do you think age in families has any points to it at all, Uncle?'

'What is age? All families are equally old, in one sense. But if you're thinking of quality due to mating for generations within a certain caste, well, I don't know- there's certainly 'good breeding' in the sense that you'd apply it to dogs or horses, but you can get that in any favourable physical circumstances - in the dales, by the sea; wherever conditions are good. Sound stock breeds sound stock - that's obvious. I know villages in the very North of Italy where there isn't a person of rank, and yet not one without beauty and a look of breeding. But when you come to breeding from people with genius or those exceptional qualities which bring men to the front, I'm very doubtful whether you don't get distortion rather than symmetry. Families with military or naval origin and

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tradition have the best chance, perhaps - good physique and not too much brain; but Science and the Law and Business are very distorting. No! where I think 'old' families may have a pull is in the more definite sense of direction their children get in growing up, a set tradition, a set objective; also perhaps to a better chance in the marriage market; and in most cases to more country life, and more encouragement to taking their own line and more practice in taking it. What's talked of as 'breeding'

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....'You believe then in the passing on of an attitude to life rather than in blood.'

in humans is an attribute of mind rather than of body. What

one thinks and feels is mainly due to tradition, habit and ed-

'Yes, but the two are very mixed.'"

ucation...'

This conversation deals with the age-old problem of heredity and environment and the effect of the two on a person's fate. Uncle Adrian, although he admits that the two cannot be separated, seems to feel that it is traditions and attributes of mind that are passed on rather than good blood. The individual who comes from an old family has a better chance in the world because of his environment and opportunities. His fate is directly due to his inheritance of tradition, of privilege, working through society.

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Maid in Waiting. p. 155-157.

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## o. Flowering Wilderness.

Flowering Wilderness is a sequel to Maid in Waiting.

The two novels follow A Modern Comedy and some of the Forsyte family figure in the background. Flowering Wilderness carries on the love story of Dinny Cherrell, begun in Maid in Waiting, and is, of the two, the much better story. Galsworthy is true to form in this, his last published work, as he presents the problem of the individual struggling between love and the sense of duty.

In the beginning of the book, Dinny Cherrell falls desperately in love with Wilfrid Desert, whom she had met ten years before at Fleur's wedding. Wilfrid has just returned from the East where he had been seized by the infidels, made to recant Christianity or give up his life, and chose Mohammedanism, half in pity for his would-be slayer, and half because he had little faith in creeds. The problem is there. Dinny's family and all English society look down on a man who is not true to form.

"An Englishman who does that lets down the lot of us."

Dinny's feelings are not those of her family. She looks at the problem individually and wants to marry Wilfrid just the same. At this point in the story, to one who is acquainted with Galsworthy's philosophy, one feels that Dinny will eventually not break with her caste, and that Wilfrid will not let her marry him. The interest lies in what reasons will be

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Flowering Wilderness. p. 73

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given for not going on with the marriage. There is really nothing to hinder, and, as Fleur says, "Modern society will forget all about it in a fortnight." But it is not modern society that counts.

All would perhaps be well, if it were not for Wilfrid's peculiar personality. He has a great deal of spiritual pride. He cannot stand being called a coward. Moreover, he is beginning to doubt his own conduct and is not sure whether he was not yellow after all. All this means unhappiness for both Dinny and Wilfrid. Wilfrid finally is made to see that until he knows his own mind, he cannot be happy, or make anyone else happy, and so goes off to Siam.

Dinny, whose eggs are all in one basket, is terribly let down, and feels that Fate is against her, but you feel that she will keep her end up and make life happy for those with whom she comes in contact.

This book is a good illustration of the struggle of an individual with society and with his own nature. Wilfrid's real struggle is with his spiritual pride, though this is no doubt due to the fact that he is a member of respectable middle class English society. Dinny's struggle is not with family opposition, for she has won the majority of her relatives over to her side, but with the peculiar trait in Wilfrid, -spiritual unrest in his soul. That is something that she can not reach. In her despair, she turns to the stars. She feels that "the

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Flowering Wilderness. p. 169.

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wheeling jewels on the indigo velvet of all space really concern themselves with little men, the lives and loves of human insects, who, born from an embrace, met and clung and died and became dust? .. were they really in their motions and their relative positions the writing on the wall for men to read?

No! that was only human self-importance! To his small wheel man bound the Universe. Swing low, sweet chariots! But they didn't! Men swung with them - in space. They guided, man followed."

To Dinny, it seems as though Fate is against l. her, that she is a mere pawn in the hands of some invisible power.

It seems utterly unfair for Dinny's love to be nipped in the bud for such a small thing as the Eastern affair was, but then again there is the thought that perhaps Wilfrid really was not fine enough for her. It is understood that Galsworthy had written a third book, making a trilogy as seems to be his custom, and I hope that he has given Dinny better treatment. If "Character is Fate", then surely she deserves a better fate than Galsworthy has given her thus far. But if, as he says, "there is only one flowering of real love in a woman's life" and this was Dinny's, then the result is pure tragedy.

Galsworthy never leaves his readers without giving some hopeful philosophy for the situation involved. The closing

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Flowering Wilderness. p. 246.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 209

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54. lines of Flowering Wilderness show us that Dinny's view-point is not one of hopeless despair. On the night she returns home to Condaford, on returning from a walk by herself just before retiring, she says, "Well, I have had my hour. It can't be helped. I must go in. "Yes, she has had her hour in two ways, - her hour by herself to adjust herself to her family, and her hour of love, the finding of the man she Loved. The rest of the speech shows that Galsworthy meant this to be taken two ways, for the following sentence, -"It can't be helped", refers to one idea, the outcome of the love affair, - and the next, "I must go in", refers to the others, - merely "I must go in. I have been out long enough." The "it-can't-be-helped" attitude is a fatalistic one and is more philosophical than a rebellious, bitter one. Galsworthy has Dinny achieve an objective point of view which is sane, hopeful, and courageous. Dinny's last words again refer to Fate. "Iwonder which is my lucky star."

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Flowering Wilderness. p. 320.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 320.

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#### B. Certain Plays.

1. Illustrations or social injustice.

In Galsworthy's plays, as well as in his novels, we find the central theme of the individual versus Fate working through society. There are three subdivisions of this main theme found in the plays. They are the individual's struggle with a hostile environment, his struggle to escape social bondage, and his struggle with himself. Fate assumes the form of environment, social standards, and character.

## a. The Silver Box.

The Silver Box is one of three plays which show the individual's struggle with environment, and the social injustice which results. The Silver Box is a finely balanced contrast of the standards of morality expected from the rich and from the poor. Jack Barthwick, the son of a wealthy Member of Parliament, comes home one night, quite drunk, with a bag and purse which he has stolen from the lady with whom he has been spending the evening. Jones, the charwoman's husband, also, drunk, follows him in, and, to score off Jack, as he has scored off his ladyfriend, takes the purse and also a silver cigarette box lying on the table. The outcome is that Jones is taken to court and is given a sentence of one month with hard labour, while the evidence against Jack, known to his parents and their lawyers, is hushed up with money and he is free.

d A -11-.  The play shows the difference that money makes in a court of law. The evidence is exactly the same against them. They were both drunk, they were both guilty of theft, and neither remembered exactly what had happened. The elder Barthwick is very much concerned that his son has come to such a pass, for he thinks that it is only individuals of the lower classes who get drunk or commit crimes. The main concern of the Barthwicks is that there will be a scandal which will get into the papers. Money smooths things over for them, but leaves the elder Barthwick, who really doesn't intend to hurt others, rather ashamed. He wants Jones to be let off easily, but his solicitor takes charge of the affair for him.

The Law is hostile and unjust to the Joneses. Mrs. Jones, the only support of the family, loses her job as a result of the affair. Mr. Jones, who has the reader's sympathy from the beginning, is a bewildered and indignant victim of Fate. His last speech is a vain protest against the power of money.

"Call this justice? What about 'im? 'E got drunk! 'E took the purse - 'e took the purse but it's 'is money got 'im off -Justice!"

Galsworthy shows us individuals as they are - the Barth-wicks, proud and wealthy; - the Joneses, poor and disheartened.

He shows us society as it is, - magistrates in a court of law,
- the turning and twisting of the law, and the sentencing of

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Silver Box. p.32

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#### c. The Forest.

I included The Forest in this thesis because it shows how injustice can work through one of society's institutions, the stock market, in the swindling game. The character trait which is responsible for this is further explained as the "cat force" or pounce of nature, the primitive desire to get what you can for yourself. The setting of the play is both in London and in Africa, and even in the geography we see in contrast and in similarity the efforts of man to fend for himself in a hostile environment. In Africa, forest law prevails, - that is, each for himself; one's own ends first. In London's financial world, it is the same, - "Self for self and devil take the hindermost."

The central character, Bastaple, a shrewd financier, backs an expedition into the Belgian Congo under the pretext of putting the slave trade in the limelight, but with the real object of driving up the price of his South African shares. In Africa, fever, hunger, and death follow the expedition, driven onward by a man of iron will named Strood, who uses the expedition for his own ends, to discover diamonds. A human sacrifice of innocent individuals is made in the name of humanity, l. John Galsworthy, Plays, The Forest. p.532

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for the ultimate purpose of making money.

Back in London, Bastaple, hearing from a lone survivor of the expedition of Strood's efforts to find diamonds, makes the false report that Strood has penetrated the jungle and discovered the diamonds, thereby winning money instead of losing all. He has covered up his tracks so cleverly that Tregay, a war correspondent, who knows that Bastaple has swindled everybody but cannot prove anything nor make him confess, is beaten. "There goes a tiger. But he's right. We shall never pring it home to him. His pads leave no track."

As a last ironical touch, Bastaple tells his confidential man to double his charities, and then slowly smiles, stretching himself "with a sigh of satisfaction, his fingers spreading and crisping unconsciously, like the claws of a cat."

The play ends with the triumph of society and of environment over their victims. Bastaple is a typical example of the swindler in the regions of high finance. The innocent victims of this social injustice are the members of the expedition, both white and black, who were driven to their death or died of starvation and fever, and also the unmentioned mass of people who lost money on the stock exchange through the false statement of Bastaple.

Fate, too, plays its part in this play, Strood, ambitious and greedy by nature, chooses to change the aim of the

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Forest. p. 543-544.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 544.

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expedition, thereby causing great hardship and ultimate loss of life to all except one who reaches London again and tells Bastaple of Strood's purpose. Thus Fate plays into the tiger's hands. The money he makes on the false statement of the diamond discovery is much more than he would have made on the first project. The triumph of the tiger is really due to his cleverness in turning, through a twist of Fate, a loss into a win.

## c. The Show.

The Show is an excellent drama of private life showing the struggle of certain individuals with Fate in the form of the public, the press, and the law. Again it is a drama of social injustice, in this case, the injustice of the press in particular.

This play is somewhat of a mystery as it opens with a suicide, and we are as interested in finding out the motive for it as are the press, the public, and the law. The facts of the case are that Colin Morecombe is found dead in his home, apparently a suicide. He and his wife Anne had not been on intimate terms for over a year, she and he each having their private affairs. The police and the press both drag forth all the evidence they can, whether it seems to have any bearing on the case or not. The only clues other than their private affairs are a letter which Colin sent the night he committed suicide and the fact that he was moody at times. At the inquest, after both the wife and the girl whom Colin had been with on occasion,

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have been on the witness stand, Colin's best man, to whom Colin sent the letter, appears with the evidence to clear up the mystery. We learn, through the conversation of the jurymen, that Colin had twice before been temporarily insane, had felt the mood coming on again, and thought it best to die. Neither his mother nor his wife had known of his secret.

The play attacks the law and the press in their attempts to ferret out peoples' private affairs. The wife, Anne, is a victim through the pringing out of her love for Darrel. Colin's mother is a victim since her son's name is being dragged down by bringing in the girl, Daisy Odiham, as a witness. Colonel Roland, Anne's father, is as innocent victim, since he learns for the first time of his daughter's affair with Darrel. Both Daisy Odiham and her father are victims of publicity through the press.

The play shows that human nature is responsible for the show that is made of this case. The public wants to read all the details of the case; the law demands that all such matters be cleared up. And "the law takes no account of privacy when a thing like this happens."

The press considers that its duty is to safeguard against injustice. The play certainly shows the irony of its purpose in comparison with the results.

Galsworthy makes the individual reporter in this play a very likable chap, not responsible for the taste of his public,

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Show. p. 504.

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out a tool of it. Galsworthy is really pointing an ironic finger at human nature as it is found in the mass of people, the public. Human nature in the mass is curious and sensation-loving. There is social injustice through certain traits of character. Everyone reads the news in the papers and the majority enjoy reading scandal. Galsworthy is hitting us all in this play. "It's human nature to want to see all there is."

The curious spectators at the inquest comment as they leave the court-room, "Well, the show's over. . I'd no idea it'd be so frightfully interesting. . Never was so thrilled in my life . . . There's nothing like real life."

Though Galsworthy is not in the habit of moralizing, perhaps there is a hint in this one line. Odiham speaks, - "Ah! well - it's a warnin' against 'avin' a private life." Yes, even though there seems to be no danger of one's private affairs being known, as in the case of Anne and Colin, Fate is apt to play a trick on one, as it did on her.

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Show. p. 599.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p.605.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p.590.

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### 2. Illustrations of caste feeling.

Although I said in the beginning of my discussion or the plays that there were three subdivisions of the main theme of the individual versus Fate working through society, it is difficult to set up definite limits between these three: environment, social standards, and character. It is but an arbitrary divisioning, and it is to be remembered that there are elements of one in each of the others. In the first three plays, - The Silver Box, The Forest, and The Show, the individual is a victum of one or more of society's institutions, of a hostile social environment. In the following group of plays, caste feeling, or social standards, present the problem of the individual struggling with Fate in the form of various classes of society.

## a. Strife.

In <u>Strife</u> there is a perfect balance between two branches of society, capital and labor. The situation is a strike at the Trenartha Tin Plate Works. The directors meet to consider their policy in regard to the strike. They are losing their customers and their shares are going down. They know that the strikers and their families are facing starvation and want to come to an agreement. Anthony, the Chairman of the Board, and an extremist, believes in holding on and breaking the spirit of the strikers, rather than giving in. On the other hand the laborers will not give in until their demands

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are granted. Their leader, Roberts, is also an extremist.

Both Anthony and Roberts stand for their principles, which are right enough, except that they go too far. The majority of the Board and of the workers are ready for compromise.

The contrast between the two social classes is further carried out in a scene with Enid, the daughter of Anthony, and Annie, the wife of Roberts. Enid is full of sympathy for Annie's wretched condition and wants to help her, but Annie will not take any help. The working class pride themselves on their class feeling just as much as the "privileged" class.

Roberts even goes so far, in his passionate appeal to his men, as to plead for the future generations,- "Tis not for this little moment of time we're fighting - not for ourselves, our own little bodies, and their wants, 'tis for all those that come after throughout all time."

And just at this time,

Galsworthy puts in the ironic and pathetic incident which the reader has already anticipated. Someone appears to tell Roberts that his wife is dead. This brings condemnation down on Roberts' head. One of the workmen shouts, "Lost his wife! Aye! Can't ye see? Look at home, look at your own wives! What's to save them? Ye'll have the same in all your homes before long!"

The situation now becomes, not a fight between capital and labor, but a struggle between two individuals, Anthony and

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, Strife. p. 92-93.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p.93.

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Roberts. Anthony feels that Roberts is unsafe, is too violent a Socialist. Roberts has a chip on his shoulder because he wasn't born a gentleman like Anthony. Anthony resigns his position on the Board, when a motion is put through to make a settlement with the workers. He has stood out for no compromise and for a fair fight. He feels that the Board's action is disgraceful. Roberts finds out that his comrades have deserted him only at the conference which is the closing scene of the play. Roberts says to Anthony, - "Then you're no longer Chairman of this company! Ah! ha-ha, ha, ha! They've thrown ye over -- thrown over their Chairman. Ah-ha-ha! So - they've done us both down, Mr. Anthony."

men both broken", and the irony of it all is that the terms they finally agree on are the identical ones that were put up at the beginning of the strike. The play ends where it begins, except for all the suffering caused. "All this - all this- and and what for?"

The reply is, "That's where the fun comes in "Just one individual in the play is able to see the situation objectively, to see the comedy in the ineffectual struggle between capital and labor. The comic spirit, Fate, grins at man's efforts, his helplessness in face of social forces which prove too strong for him.

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, Strife. p. 104.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 105.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p. 105.

<sup>4.</sup> Ibid. p. 105.

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### b. The Eldest Son.

The Eldest Son, like The Silver Box, deals with standards of morality for the rich and for the poor. In The Eldest Son, there is more of the idea of loyalty to caste, a theme which is found in many of Galsworthy's novels and plays. The same thing done by members of different classes is not really the same thing.

The scene of <u>The Eldest Son</u> is the country home of an English baronet. The family is interested in a mild way in the fact that their underkeeper, Dunning, has got a girl in the village in trouble. They discuss whether Dunning ought to marry the girl when he is not interested in her any longer, and there are arguments on both sides. Sir William comes to the conclusion that Dunning must marry the girl or lose his job.

Dame Convention must be treated with all due respect.

A parallel situation arises with Bill, the eldest son of Sir William, and Freda, his mother's lady's-maid, as the central figures. Bill's parents would like to see him marry a girl of his class, settle down, and go into politics. When they learn of the situation, Bill announces that he and Freda are engaged to be married. His mother tries to show him how wretched such a marriage would be because of the difference in class. She says, - "You haven't a taste or a tradition in common. . It's no use being sentimental - for people brought up as we are, to have different manners is worse than to have

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different souls."

Some of the younger generation think marriage with Freda would be a good thing for Bill. One of his younger sisters says, "Freda's just as much of a lady as most girls. Why shouldn't he marry her, and go to Canada? It's really what he's fit for "But his older sister thinks only of the scandal and what it will mean to the family to have the marriage take place. "And, after all," she adds, "what's coming won't affect her as if she'd been a lady." The majority of the family take the superior 3. attitude of the upper class. Marriage between Bill and Freda would destroy family prestige and social position. Sir William, who demanded that Dunning marry or lose his position, now threatens to cut his son off without a penny if he marries Freda. The fate of the individual depends on his social position. The aristocracy are bound by social tradition. The lower classes are not.

With Bill, the problem is not one of morality nor social tradition, but a question of self-respect. He feels it his duty to marry Freda. In a family conclave, the outcome is left to Freda, who, seeing that she is not welcomed, even by Bill, refuses the offer of marriage. She keeps her pride at the risk of her good name. Free spirit triumphs. One admires Freda for her pluck. The family can breathe with relief, but they remain

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Eldest Son. p. 123.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 120.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p. 129.

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discomforted.

Freda is pictured as the victim of Fate, Fate in the form of the social bondage of the aristocracy. In the end her destiny depends on herself, and she no doubt takes the wiser course, much to the relief of the Cheshira family. Marriage with Bill does not mean happiness for her, but merely establishing her rights. The reason Galsworthy brings in the parallel situation is to show how different human nature works when it is a question of caste feeling. To quote from one critic:—"Galsworthy's intention was just to throw an ironical light on average human nature and show that social fusion is not the easy matter some would have us believe. However we may talk of equality, we can't change human nature."

# c. The Foundations.

Galsworthy is always at his best when he deals with contracting types of English society. The Foundations shows the insecurity of English upper class society after the World War, and shows the individual versus Fate in the form of social caste.

In the first act, little Anne, daughter of Lord Dromondy, M.P., and a footman are down in the cellar, the footman selecting wines for a dinner of the Anti-Sweaters. Anne asks him, "Oh...James, are these really the foundations?" James replies, "You might 'arf say so. There's a lot under a woppin' big house like this; you can't hardly get to the bottom of it."

<sup>1.</sup> Leon Schalit, John Galsworthy, a Survey. p.260.

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Anne, getting the idea, adds, "Everything's built on something, isn't it? And what's that built on?" Suddenly they discover a bomb. A representative of the press, who has come to write up the dinner, seizes this as a big piece of news. "Highest class dining to relieve distress of lowest class - bombed by same. . The foundations of Society are reeling!"

The reporter, in his interview with Lord William, finds that he (William) has rather original views on the national situation. The following selections from the play show that Sir William realizes that only Fate has put him in a large house and his brother in the sweat house. "I want to show the people that we stand side by side with them, as we did in the trenches."

In answer to the question, -"What do you say about this attempt to bomb you?", he replies, "Well, in a way I think it's d-d natural."

Well, it's pure accident" (Fate) "that I'm here and they're there."

"He (the bomber) thinks; 'But for b. The grace of God (Fate), there swill I. Why should that blighter have everything and I nothing?'....And gradually - you see - this contrast - becomes an obsession with him."

Lord William is an unusually sympathetic and broad-minded character who sees in the bombing the natural course of events, the fatality of it. The only harm that he has done is simply in being born.

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Foundations. p. 31%.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 320. b. Ibid. p. 323.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p. 323. b. Ibid. p. 324.

<sup>4.</sup> Ibid. p. 323.

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In connection with the fatality of the course of events,

Lord William asks the reporter, - "I say: Is there really going
to be a revolution, or are you making it up, you Press?" And
the Press replies, "We don't know. We never know whether we
come before the event, or it comes before us."

Sation shows what an influence the Press has on the fate of a
country, - again Fate working on individuals through society.

The ideas of the lower classes, represented by Mrs. Lemmy who finishes trousers for "tuppense three farthin's a pair", and her son, who planted the bomb, are as interesting as Lord William's are. Lemmy feels that "the Styte 'as got to 'ave its pipes seen to. The 'ole show's goin' up pop."3 He likens "Sasiety" to the cork in a bottle of old wine, - rotten, old and mouldering, which when pulled out, lets the wine (blood) flow. Lemmy, strangely enough, advocates a new religion, kindness, but doubts whether it can come about without blood-shed. "Blood and kindness! Spill the blood o' them that aren't kind - an' there ye are! . . . I tell yer tha foundytions is rotten." Mrs. Lemmy, whose luck has been anything but good, has a happy disposition and an optimistic view of life. "Therr bain't nothin' in life, you know, but a bit o' lovin'; - all said an' done. . . 'Tes the heart makes the world go round; 'tesn't nothin' else, in my opinion."

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Foundations. p. 324.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 347.

<sup>4.</sup> Ibid. p. 332.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p. 328.

<sup>5.</sup> Ibid. p. 334.

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In the third and last act, Lemmy and Lord William exchange views. Lemmy advises Lord William to give his money away instead of spending it for luxuries. He says, "If yer went into the foundytions of your wealf - would you feel like 'avin' any? It all comes from uvver peoples' 'ard, unpleasant lybour - it's all built on Muvver as yer might sy. An' if yer daon't get rid o' some of it in bein' kind - yer daon't feel syfe nor comfy."

Lemmy comes to Sir William's rescue when a mob threatens the big house. Lemmy tells the mob what a good fellow Lord William is and that they must keep one or two like him under glass for future generations. A riot is averted and the play ends mirthfully in the discovery that the supposed bomb is not a bomb at all, but a lead cistern weight, - thereby throwing aside the entire case of the Press. But that does not phase the Press; - the story will come out, and with a bomb in it.

Lord William embodies the individual struggling with Fate working through society. Having been born with a great house, money, and social status, he is therefore looked upon with envy and jealousy by the revolutionary elements of society. Galsworthy has presented Fate working through wealth, through social standing, and through the press. Capitalism has its foundations in the working class, and Galsworthy takes for a type of the contrasting group Mrs. Lemmy, and shows how her Fate, poverty and hard work, is also a result of the whole system of society.

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Foundations. p. 343-344.

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Galsworthy offers as an alleviation to this problem the religion of kindness and philanthropy. He does not offer any one panacea for the evils of capitalism, but he pleads for more kindness and brotherly love.

### d. The Skin Game.

The problem in The Skin Game is the struggle of the landowning class and the manufacturing class over land. The feud
between the two classes starts when Hillcrest, a country gentleman, sells some land and cottages to Hornblower, who finds clay
in the land and starts a pottery. The country gentleman feels
that manufacturing is going to have a bad effect on the town,
and more than that, fears that the newcomers are out to fleece
the town. "All life's a struggle between people at different
stages of development, in different positions, with different
amounts of social influence and property. And the only thing
is to have rules of the game and keep them. New people like
the Hornblowers haven't learnt those rules; their only rule is
to get all they can."

Hillcrest prides himself on being a
gentleman, "a man who keeps his form and doesn't let life scupper him out of his standards."

The feeling between the two classes turns into a real fight for a piece of land, a beauty spot, which the Hillcrests used to own and which is next to their land. In enlarging his

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Skin Game. p.352.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 352.

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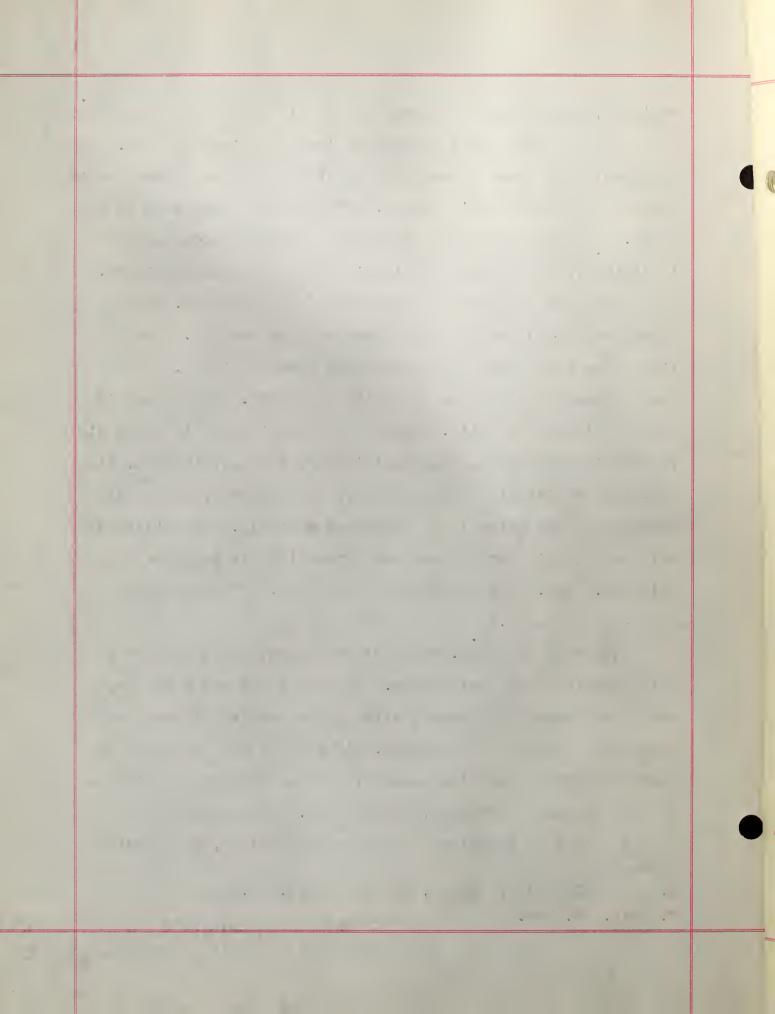
business, Hornblower has turned out of his cottages old tenants, and plans to build a new factory on this new piece of land. The Hillcrests' attitude toward having chimneys in their backyard is suggested in Hillcrest's remark, - "My father would turn in his grave." Galsworthy does not laugh at these standards and traditions, but he points an ironic finger at such sentiment.

The land in question is for sale at an auction. Hornblower and Hillcrest are both determined to have it. The auction turns out to be a skin game when a third bidder, who is really Hornblower's agent, gets the final bid. Hornblower is really actuated by spite. He has been willing not to build his factory in view of the Hillcrests' home, if they, in turn, will be friendly with him and his family, particularly, if the Hillcrests will recognize the Hornblowers socially. The Hillcrests will not do this, and consequently the fight is anything but a fair one. Mrs. Hillcrest warns Hornblower, - "As you fight foul - so shall we."

The threat of Mrs. Hillcrest turns out to be more of a skin game than the auction was. She has found out something about the young Hornblower's wife, Chloe, and she intends to use it as a lever on Hornblower. If he will not sell pack the land, she will spread the scandal, and the Hornbiowers will be driven, by social pressure, out of town. Hillcrest doesn't like the idea of bringing a woman into the fight, or of using

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Skin Game. p.355.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 369.



such a dirty weapon as scandal. It is against his code as a gentleman. Mrs. Hillcrest, however, believes she is always right, whatever she does, and succeeds in making Hornblower give up the land.

Chloe is nothing but a pawn, a victim of Fate in this skin game. She loves her husband and is desperately afraid that he will find out about her past. She comes to the Hillcrests and asks them to tell her husband, who has become suspicious, a different but convincing story, if he should ask them any questions. Mr. Hillcrest is willing to help her, but his attempts are fruitless when he learns that her husband really knows. Chloe tries to commit suicide, but is unsuccessful.

The play ends with the Hornblowers beaten and disgraced, still bitterly hating the Hillcrests. The fate of the Hillcrests is hinted in the subtitle of the play: "Who touches pitch shall be defiled."

The Hillcrests have used the weapon of scandal, and have thereby lost their gentility. "What is it that gets loose when you begin a fight, and makes you what you think you're not? What blinding evil! Begin as you may, it ends in this - skin game! . . When we began this fight, we had clean hands - are they clean now? What's gentility worth if it can't stand fire?"

Galsworthy shows both the good and bad points on both sides. The Hillcrests' social position determines their actions

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Skin Game. p. 351.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 388-389.

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in the quarrel. They have traditions and sentiments on which the machine age is encroaching. Galsworthy is pointing out the fate of the country gentleman who does not accept the changing order, and who resents the ideas of the modern age. His pride receives a fall. That is his fate.

The fate of the Hornblowers is their lack of a past. The future is their concern, although they envy the Hillcrests their social position. Since the Hornblowers have no social traditions, they resent the snobbishness of the Hillcrests, and their resentment is justified. (There was no need of Mrs. Hillcrest's deliberately insulting Chloe by inferring that she was not a lady.) It is Fate in the form of human nature for the Hornblowers to desire social recognition equal to that of the Hillcrests.

There are several direct references to Fate in the play.

In connection with the future of the tenants who are going to be put out, Hillcrest says to Hornblower, - "It doesn't occur to you that people, however humble, like to have some say in their own fate?"

They may like to have some say, but do they?

Hornblower believes that "God helps those who 'elp themselves", but Fate steps in and robs him of his victory.

Another more subtle allusion to Fate is used in connection with the woman whose land is up for sale. Chloe's husband makes the remark, - "She's a leery old bird, - reminds me of one

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Skin Game. p. 358.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p.358.

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of those pictures of Fate." The land that she bought from Hillcrest's father is the direct cause of the unhappy fate of them all. If she had not decided to be fair to all putting the land up at auction, there would not have been a "skin game".

The message of this play is the same as that in <u>Strife</u>, think carefully before starting a quarrel; you never know when
and how you will end it. Settle the problem peaceably. See
your opponent in a human light. Be more human, more understanding.

### e. Loyalties.

Throughout all of Galsworthy's writings runs an all-pervading sense of loyalty that is typically British, - loyalty to one another and to King and country, loyalty to family and loyalty to caste. The play Loyalties deals with the sense of loyalty to race and class. The story, in brief, is as follows, At the houseparty of an English gentleman, a large sum of money is stolen from a Jewish guest, De Levis. He accuses Ronald Dancy, who is also a guest, and an army officer. The matter is kept dark until De Levis is blackballed by a certain club. De Levis, as much a gentleman as Dancy, would withdraw the accusation but Dancy calls him a "damned Jew", thereby insulting not only De Levis but also his race. Finally Dancy is cornered, confesses and commits suicide. Everyone in the play is true to what he or she believes to be the best traditions of his or

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Skin Game. p. 360.

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her class.

Loyalties is not a pro-Semitic play, but in an international sense, shows how an individual, in this case a Jew, is treated by society, a society which does not recognize one of another race or nationality as a social equal. Again it is the problem of an individual versus Fate, Fate in the form of difference in race. De Levis's fate is due to his being a Jew. Though he succeeds in winning his point, the confession of Dancy, he does not really enjoy his triumph. He does not wish to cause the death of Dancy. On the other hand, Dancy's fate is due to his character. Dancy always does things "on the jump". In the war, in taking the money, in committing suicide, he acts quickly and nervily. It is his "unbridled temperament, his inconsiderate wilfulness, his arrogant temperament which brought him to this pass."

The play shows in a more general sense the fate of several individuals or classes of society. Dancy's wife, Mabel, at first believes him innocent of the theft and persuades him not to run away from it but to go to a lawyer. When she at last finds out the truth, Dancy says to her, - "Pity you wouldn't come to Africa three months ago."

But Mabel has to keep faith with her husband, has to be loyal to him, believe him innocent.

Then, also, Twisden, Dancy's Lawyer, when he learns that

<sup>1.</sup> Leon Schalit, John Galsworthy, a Survey. p.302.

<sup>2.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, Loyalties. p. 402.

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Dancy really is guilty, finds his own loyalty or duty to his profession is stronger than to his client. He tells Dancy,"We can't tell what the result of this collapse will be. The police have the theft in hand. They may issue a warrant. The money could be refunded, and the costs paid - somehow that can all be managed. But it may not help. In any case, what end is served by your staying in the country? You can't save your honour - that's gone."

But instead of running off to Morocco as he was advised to do, Dancy has enough of the sportsman in him to go home and to tell his wife. Before he has a chance to get away from his own home, the police arrive with the warrant, and he commits suicide pefore they can arrest him. His letter to a brother officer gives his motive or excuse for committing suicide.

"This is the only decent thing I can do. It's too damned unfair to her. It's only another jump. A pistol keeps faith."

Everyone in the play keeps faith with his own kind, but that is not enough. Galsworthy is pointing out that although loyalties, by human nature, come before everything else, "loyalties cut up against each other sometimes."

Loyalties too often become prejudices.

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, Loyalties. p.459.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 464.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p. 448.

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3. Illustrations of Fate through character.
a. Social degeneration.

In the third and last group or plays, the main theme is the individual versus Fate, Fate in the form of character. Galsworthy used the motto, "Character is Fate", in the novel, The Patrician, and he might well have used it in some of his plays. The idea of character as Fate is a general one. Galsworthy presents two aspects of this theme, - the individual whose character is such that he or she becomes a social degenerate, or becomes the victim of society through his character, and the individual whose ideals for others become a tragedy for himself. In the following plays the main characters are not inherently vicious or at all criminally disposed. Heredity and uppringing have a good deal to do with their misfortunes. Poverty is a handicap. Temperament and environment bring about a false step, and the ending, in most cases, is tragic.

## (1.) Justice.

The first play in this group, <u>Justice</u>, which deals with an erring individual in the hands of the law, is said to have brought about certain reforms in English prison life. Though not written for any other purpose than to show the general blindness of Justice, it made an extraordinary impression on the English theater-going public at the time of its first appearance, and can never fail, when acted properly, to leave an overpowering effect on its audience.

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William Falder, junior clerk in a lawyer's office, in a moment of madness, forges a check to get money to run away with Ruth Honeywill whose husband treats her badly. He is not clever enough to get away with it, is caught, and serves a term in prison. When he eventually comes out, he is not the same man. He is worn, thin, and very nervous. He can not hold down a job. His old firm will not take him back unless he gives up the woman he loves, at least until she gets a divorce from her husband. To cap the climax, the law is hunting him a second time for failure to report himself to the police and for forging a reference. As the law closes in on him, Falder leaps to his death, and thus ends the play. In the words of one of the characters whose sympathies have been with Falder since the beginning, "No one'll touch him now! Never again! He's safe with gentle Jesus!"

Falder's fate, from his first misstep, is an unbroken chain of misfortunes which is consistent with his character.

Falder is not an exceptional person, rather a little below the average. He is easily led, weak-willed, and very sensitive.

His spirit is not strong enough to combat the effects of prison life. He is beaten by his own temperament.

Galsworthy's compassion for the weak and caged is well known. "It's the same with dogs. If you treat'em with kindness, they'll do anything for you; but to shut 'em up alone, it only makes 'em savage."

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, Justice. p. 173. 2. Ibid. p. 159.

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The only solution that Galsworthy offers is more sympathetic understanding, more humanity. Society will never succeed in reforming erring individuals until it takes human nature and individual temperament into account. Galsworthy urges freedom of self-expression for the individual as long as this does not seriously interfere with the workings of society.

### (2.) The Pigeon.

The Pigeon concerns the attempted reform of three social degenerates. The first act describes "the lot of three derelicts who come, in turn, on Christmas eve, to seek shelter with the painter, Christopher Wellwyn." The three are Mrs. Megan, l. a young flower-seller, Timson, an old cabby and a confirmed drunkard, and Ferrand, the philosophical vagabond. Wellwyn has a weakness for wastrels and for reformers. His home is an asylum for both. The second act "pursues the destinies of these three wastrels, and ridicules the attempts of the reformers to reclaim them. In the third act, we finally recognize that the derelicts are irreclaimable; for such as they, there is no salvation."

"Character is Fate"is the motto of this play, for, as

Ferrand says, "All of us, we have our fates. . In each of us

there is that against which we cannot struggle." Expressing
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their fates in one word, Mrs. Megan's was love, Timson's rum,

Ferrand's the road, - and Wellwyn's incorrigible compassion.

<sup>1.</sup> Leon Schalit, John Galsworthy, a Survey. p. 249

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 249.

<sup>5.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Pigeon. p. 190.

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In the third act, Ferrand comes pack to see Wellwyn and here Gaisworthy allows Ferrand to express himself fully and impressively. Ferrand knows he will end by dving the death of a dog. When he was ill and had wanted to die, he had peen taken to an institution. "Monsieur, I looked in their eyes while I lay there, and I saw more clear than the blue heaven that they thought it pest that I should die, although they would not let me. . . and I said: 'So much the worse for you. I will live a little more.' One is made like that! Life is sweet, Monsieur." Being confined in institutions has made Ferrand pitter. "Ah! Monsieur, I am a loafer, waster - what you like - for all that poverty is my only crime. If I were rich, should I not be simply veree original, 'ighly respected, with soul above commerce, travelling to see the world? And that young girl, would she not be 'that charming ladee,' 'veree chic, you know!' And the old Tims - good old-fashioned gentleman - drinking his liquor well. Eh! bien - what are we now? Dark beasts, despised by That is life, Monsieur." To which Wellwyn replies, all. "We're our own enemies, Ferrand. I can afford it - you can't. Quite true!" And then Ferrand tells Wellwyn that he is the

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Pigeon. p. 212.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 213.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p. 213.

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only person that can do the hopeless ones any good because he is hopeless too. Wellwyn is the only one who understands.

The would-be reformers do not get anywhere because they are as incorrigible as the waifs they would reform. "All theory stumbles over the incorrigible individuality of mankind.

All experiments at reform are frustrated by the human nature of those to be reformed!"

1. Ferrand and the others are happy in their fate until social reformers try to change it. "We wild ones - we know a thousand times more of life than ever will those sirs. They waste their time trying to make rooks white. . Leave us to live, or leave us to die when we like in the free air. . . The good God made me so that I would rather walk a whole month of nights, hungry, with the stars, than sit one single day making round business on an office stool. .

I can not help it that I am a vagabond. What would you have? It is stronger than me."

Galsworthy makes of the characters in this play, especially Ferrand, such vivid illustrations of the motto, "Character is Fate", that it is evident that he believes that no fundamental changes can be made in human nature.

<sup>1.</sup> Leon Schalit, John Galsworthy, a Survey. p. 251

<sup>2.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Pigeon. p. 213.

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### (3.) The Fugitive.

The main theme of The Fugitive is the hunting theme, woman hunted down by man. Clare is the wife of George Dedmond,
a very steady-going man. She was one of seven children of a
poor parson, brought up on "too much morality and rice pudding."
George is a good sort but Clare has a physical aversion toward
him which forces her to run away. She goes to Malise, a writer,
at first, simply because he understands her. Malise warns her
of her fate, alone and without money,- "This great damned world,
and - you! . . Suppose you don't take covert but struggle on in
the open. Society! The respectable! The pious! Even those
who love you! Will they let you be? Hue and cry! The hunt
was joined the moment you broke away! It will never let up!
Covert to covert - till they've run you down, and you're back
in the cart, and God pity you!"
Clare replies to this,
"Well, I'll die running."
""

Malise's prediction of Clare's fate comes true. After working in a shop selling gloves, being seen by one of her friends, and being continually hunted by her family, Clare finally seeks refuge a second time with Malise and practically throws herself in his arms. Detectives have even followed her to his door.

In the last act we find Clare living with Malise, but the pack fast closing in on both of them. George has named

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Fugitive. p.223.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p.237.

<sup>3.</sup> Ipid. p.237.

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Malise co-respondent in a divorce suit, and Malise is about to lose his job on account of the publicity. George gives Clare an alternative, - to leave Malise forever and receive a settlement of money which will leave her independent of anyone. But slowly, through Mrs. Miler, the well-meaning caretaker of the apartment, and from her husband's lawyer, - who tells her she will be "a stone round the neck of a drowning man" 1. Clare realizes that she is ruining Malise, and decides to leave him because she really loves him. Society not only drives the fugitive from covert to covert, but also would ruin Malise because of Clare's desire for liberty.

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Clare's last covert, six months later, is in a public house where she meets a young man who invites her confidence. She tells him, - "Haven't kept my end up. Lots of women do! You see: I'm too fine, and not fine enough! . . I couldn't be a saint and a martyr, and I wouldn't be a soulless doll. Neither one thing nor the other - that's the tragedy. With her last shilling she has bought some gardenias so that, as she tells the young man, "I shall die pretty!" While the gentleman leaves her to pay the bill, she takes morphia and dies. When asked whether it is a friend of his, the young man replies, "My God! She was a lady. That's all I know about her."

Several critics have something to say on the theme of

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Fugitive. p. 244.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 251.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p. 251.

<sup>4.</sup> Ipid. p.252.

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this play. Quoting from one, - "This recurrent hunting theme in Galsworthy's writings, (Irene in The Forsyte Saga, ... Audrey

Noel in The Patrician), has already been repeatedly alluded to.

It is inherent of course in the work of a man whose main theme is 'the individual versus society', the theme which gives the epic quality to his work."

Clare Dedmond, Irene Forsyte, and Ruth Honeywill (Justice) were all married young, and are in revolt against their husbands.

Another writer criticizes Galsworthy's treatment of Clare.

"The career of Clare Dedmond, from her revolt to her downfall is not a thing foreseen, a thing of fate. We feel somehow that her end is arbitrary - at all events we are not shown the steps that lead to it."

I do not agree with this criticism. I believe that Galsworthy shows that Clare is a creature who is unable to adapt herself to circumstances (such as getting a job and holding it, in the eyes of the world), and who is too strong to submit to a soulless existence with her husband. Since she can neither adapt nor submit herself, she is a hunted woman, and it seems quite logical for her career to end in suicide. I have never seen this play acted, but it seems to me that a good actress could make a very convincing part of Clare Dedmond.

Clare's fate is due to her own character. She is a creature of temperament. She says of herself that she can not adapt herself to anything. Society, of course, makes a fugitive of her, and she is beaten, in a sense, in her struggle with

<sup>1.</sup> Leon Schalit, John Galsworthy, a Survey. p. 261.

<sup>2.</sup> Kaye-Smith, Shiela, John Galsworthy. p.35.

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society. But she is also triumphant in that she has eluded her pursuers in committing suicide, and has left them something more to talk about than the scandal that they feared from her divorce.

### (4.) Windows.

Windows deals with the attempted reform of an individual, and carries out the general theme that "Character is Fate."

The story deals with the March family and Faith Bly, whose fate is in question. Mr. March, a well-to-do writer, and his son Johnny, a would-be-poet, are both idealists, while Mrs. March and the daughter Mary are not. Both Mr. March and Johnny want to believe that there is something in chivalry and altruism. Their opportunity comes in the chance to hire, as parlour-maid, Faith Bly, the daughter of their philosophical window cleaner. Faith, when eighteen, had an illegitimate child, smothered it to death, and was put in prison for the crime. She has served her term and needs to get a job.

Mrs. March is the only one in the family who has to be won over to the idea of taking in Faith. She is pessimistic from the first. In reply to her husband's remark that they should have faith and jump, she says, "If we do have Faith, we shall jump."

And Johnny, who has been to war, says, "There was one thing anyway we learned out there - When a chap was in a hole - to pull him out, even at a risk."

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, Windows. p.475.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 475.

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To which Mrs. March replies, "There are people who - the moment you pull them out - jump in again."

1. Mrs. March's knowledge of human nature is deeper than that of the rest of the family.

Although Mr. Bly believes in following one's instincts, he warns Faith, when she is given the job, that she mustn't have instincts there. However, it does not take Faith and Johnny long to get acquainted. Johnny is interested in her because he pities her. She is interested in him because he is a man. Even Johnny's instincts prove stronger than his altruism, and he is caught kissing Faith. Mrs. March insists on Faith's leaving, but Johnny stops her from going by camping outside her room, and keeping her a prisoner there. Finally, after a sixhour vigil, Johnny and Faith are summoned to a family discussion. Johnny sticks to it that Faith shall not leave, while Faith, on the contrary, wants to get away. A gentleman-friend of hers appears on the scene and he and Johnny almost come to blows. Johnny is quite sincere about wanting to help Faith. Finally, Faith blurts out, "Why can't you let me be? . . . I don't want to be rescued. I want to be let alone. I've paid for everything I've done - a pound for every shilling's worth. And all because of one minute when I was half crazy. . . You were very kind to me. But you don't see; nopody sees."

The tragedy of the play is in the words "nobody sees."

No one really sees inside anybody else. The title, "Windows",

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, Windows. p. 415.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 493-494.

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symbolizes this idea. As Mr. Bly puts it, -"There's windows all round, but you can't see. Follow your instincts - it's the only way."

Even Faith finds her gentleman-friend is not what she has thought him to be - because she "couldn't see inside him."

Johnny, who has been wrestling with his ideals, asks 2.

Faith if she will come to him, marry him. But Faith knows better. "I've got no call on you. You don't care for me and I don't for you. . . There's nothing to be done with a girl like me."

Faith knows instinctively what her fate will be.

Johnny, too, realizes what will become of her, - "that girl going by with rouge on her cheeks."

We are reminded of Mrs.

Mehan, in The Pigeon, whose fate was similar, that of being a prostitute.

The point of this play is expressed by Mr. Bly, - "Character's born, not made. You can clean yer winders and clean 'em, but that don't change the colour of the glass." It is hardly be worth while to clean windows, because they get dirty again so quickly. So with character or human nature. You try to change it, but the original keeps cropping out. Faith's fate is due to two things: - sex and society. She is a good looking girl who appeals to men, and her instincts get her into trouble with society. Society, through her prison term and her poverty, gives her a different slant on life, but does not quench her

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, Windows. p. 406.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p.496.

<sup>4.</sup> Ibid. p. 496.

<sup>3.</sup> Ibid. p.496

<sup>5.</sup> Ibid. p. 486.

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thirst for life. Galsworthy points out that society should try to see individuals as they are, and not be too idealistic, nor disappointed when efforts at reform fail.

Looking pack over the last four plays, we come to the conclusion that certain individuals, weak in character, lacking proper environment, and usually poor, are victims of society through some weakness of character. This is the case in Justice where the forging of a check by Falder finally brings him to suicide, in The Fugitive, where a woman who cannot live with her husband is pursued by society until she also commits suicide, and in Windows, where Faith Bly becomes a social outcast through her own weakness for men. In The Pigeon, which also deals with social degenerates, there is not so much of the reason for the downfall, as of the doctrine that character can not be changed. In both Windows and The Pigeon, the author shows us would-be reformers and their futile attempts at saving those who do not wish to be saved. His thesis is that individuals have to follow their instincts, - that "Character is Fate", and he does not believe that anything can change human nature.

# (5.) Escape.

Escape belongs in this group of plays dealing with the individual versus Fate working through character, and has many points in common with them. Its central theme is the hunting theme, that of <u>The Fugitive</u>. It also has points in common with <u>Justice</u>, both dealing with convicts. In all of these plays there is the strong theme that character traits are responsible

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for the fate of individuals. The central character of Escape, however, stands alone in his character traits. He is not a weak or criminal character, but a regular sport, a most likable fellow, with the characteristics of a hero instead of those of a victim. His one weakness, if it can be called a weakness, is his chivalry, which gets him into trouble.

Matt Denant, for that is the name of our hero, hits and knocks down a policeman who is about to arrest a girl for accosting him (Matt). The policeman hits his head on an iron rail and dies. That is the first episode. The rest of the play is a series of short episodes showing Matt's escape from prison where he is sent for killing the policeman, his flight, the chase which catches up with him, and finally his surrender to the police. His surrender is not the usual ending for Galsworthy, but neither is Matt the usual character. Galsworthy's main characters in <u>Justice</u> and <u>The Fugitive</u> commit suicide when they are cornered. So also does Ronald Dancy in <u>Loyalties</u>.

Schalit says of this play, "Escape, despite its bitter irony, is one of the most - perhaps the most - positive of Gals-worthy's plays, and opens up thereby new perspectives." The l. episodes, instead of showing how mean people can be to an escaped convict, show how decent they can be. Matt is the individual versus Fate. He is an escaped convict, but in evading justice is received by the world with open arms, - whereas in the play Justice, the man who fulfills the demands of justice leon Schalit, John Galsworthy, a Survey. p. 333.

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The fate of an escaped convict or any hunted person is either death or capture. It is interesting to compare Escape with The Fugitive in this respect. In The Fugitive we find a woman hunted by society, escaping by suicide, leaving the impression that life is ugly, and mankind base. In Escape we find a man hunted by society, surrendering and living, Leaving the viewpoint that life is worth living and the majority of mankind good. This is no doubt what Schalit means when he says that perhaps this is Galsworthy's most positive play. This play, more than any other, Leaves one with the feeling that life is worth living and that there are a lot of decent people in the world, - an optimistic and happier view-point than in many of his plays.

Matt embodies the individual versus Fate. His bad luck starts when he comes in contact with society through the law. He feels entitled to have a shot at the policeman, but doesn't count on the misfortune of the man's dying. His stroke of bad luck is caused by his chivalry and love of fair play. His contact with the law is directly due to his own sense of justice.

The best illustration of Matt's character is brought out in the last episode. As a last resort, Matt has taken refuge with a parson. The pursuers follow him there and when the parson is asked directly whether he has seen the convict, Matt steps out and surrenders, to save the parson from perjury.

Just as in Hyde Park, in the first episode, Matt, in his love

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of justice, could do nothing but take the part of the poor girl, so in the end he can not allow a priest to lie for his sake.

He acts consistently throughout. He tries to escape from the law, but, as he says, - "It's one's decent self one can't escape."

Matt has the sporting instinct. He is both the soldier and the gentleman. The natural fate of Matt then, is to return to prison and serve his term. He has learned that he can't escape his own conscience, and his prison term will be made easier by the knowledge that the world contains a number of kind and sympathetic people.

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, Escape. p.638.

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### b. The tragedy of idealism.

The last two plays in this group dealing with Fate through character have to do with a different aspect of the problem, the tragedy of idealism. The individuals concerned have certain idealistic character traits which society, people in the mass, do not understand. The individual is struggling with Fate, Fate in the form of ideals which seem to society to be working in opposition to the common good.

## (1.) The Mob.

Stephen More, the central character in The Mob, is a member of Parliament, and a champion of lost causes. He maintains that a great power like England should not make war on a small, weak nation. General sentiment is against him and he is labelled unpatriotic, even by his wife. But it is because he loves his country that he speaks what is in his mind. He not only makes his plea in Parliament, but goes around the country making speeches against war. He is an unalterable idealist, clinging tenaciously to his faith, - a veritable crusader.

In a very realistic mob scene, Galsworthy shows how

More's speeches for pacificism are received. He is petted with

orange skins and bruised with stones, but is never once shaken

in his faith. There is irony in the situation, for his wife's

three brothers are fighting in the war. With so much opposi
tion, More is urged to give up the fight. A friend advises

him,- "Give it up, sir. The odds are too great. It isn't

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worth it."

To which More replies, "To fight to a finish; knowing you must be beaten - is anything better worth it?"

This is the fate of an idealist. Nothing less than a fight to the finish is worth anything to More. Duty comes even before family. It is his fate to lose the fight because he is fighting against human nature in the mob. The strongest common instinct in the world is love of country. Men in the mass are simple creatures who follow their instincts. More is battling with human nature which is the one thing he can not change.

More's crusade against war has made him very unhappy. He is practically alone in his beliefs. Even his wife and child have left him. He would be happy if he could accept a patriotic creed, but his conscience, his vision, his faith will not let him.

In the last scene, More's destiny overtakes him. The mob surrounds his house, breaks the windows and captures him. He speaks to the mob: - "You are the thing that pelts the weak; kicks women; howls down free speech. This today, and that to-morrow. Brain - you have none. Spirit - not the ghost of it! If you're not meanness, there's no such thing. If you're not cowardice, there is no cowardice. Patriotism - there are two kinds - that of our soldiers, and this of mine. You have neither! . Ah! you can break my head and my windows; but don't think you can break my faith. You could never break or shake

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Mob. p.2/1.

<sup>2.</sup> Ipid. p.277.

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it, if you were a million to one." Someone flashes a knife, l. and the mob's rush and heave push More onto the steel. One of the mob is charitable to him in death, - "Poor devil! He kept his end up anyway!" Keeping one's end up is an English characteristic, and evidently the mob could appreciate his courage, even if they couldn't understand his ideals.

The death of Stephen More would seem to be the natural ending of the play, but Galsworthy does not allow the name of More to lie "forever buried and unsung". In an "aftermath", we have a last ironic picture, a statue erected to the memory of Stephen More, "faithful to his ideal." This seems to be carrying the irony a little too far. But perhaps it is characteristic of the mob, to see the wisdom of its martyrs long after they have died. Spirit triumphs in the end.

## (2.) A Bit o' Love.

A Bit o' Love is similar to The Mod in that it also deals with an idealist. Michael Strangway's wife, Beatrice, leaves him for her first love. He allows her to go, although he loves her, and he does not divorce her because the scandal would ruin her lover. Because he does not do the conventional thing, and because he is a clergyman, combined with the fact that all this takes place in a small Devonshire village where there are many gossipers and everyone is interested in everyone else's doings, he is considered a bad example and is practically run out of

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, The Mob. p. 282.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p. 283. 3. Ipid. p. 283.

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town. He is called a coward and is stoned by his parishioners. His treatment is much the same as Stephen More's in The Mob.

Michael Strangway is finally driven to contemplate suicide, simply because he doesn't want to cage his wife. A little white dove's feather comes floating down from the roof of the barn in which he is going to hang himself. A little child whom he finds asleep in the hay says, - "Lüke. The mune's sent a bit o' love!" Michael sees in this feather the symbol of love, and the message that he shall see love in the world. The love of nature and of humanity call him back to life. "God, of the moon and the sun; of joy and beauty, of loveliness and sorrow - Give me strength to go on, till I love every living thing!"

Michael Strangway is the individual idealist struggling against the brute force of the mass. He is an idealist in the sense that he loves all living things and does not believe in caging any wild thing. When it happens that his wife is the caged one, he adheres to his ideals in the face of the mob. And, although the mob almost makes him lose his ideals, a little child brings him back to earth. The tragedy for Michael, besides losing his wife, is to be misunderstood by his parishioners.

<sup>1.</sup> John Galsworthy, Plays, A Bit o' Love. p. 314.

<sup>2.</sup> Ibid. p.314.

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#### III Conclusion.

The heredity and environment that were Galsworthy's influenced his life as an individual and his career as a novelist. He had the background and money to make of his life what he wished, and having decided to become a novelist, he had the humanitarianism to picture the fate of individuals less fortunate than himself. It is the eternal struggle of the individual against Fate that forms the underlying theme in a majority of his works.

In the novels, Galsworthy presented the individual struggling with Fate in the form of social environment and institutions, the landed gentry, the wealthy class, the aristocracy, the clergy, Victorianism and modernism. In practically all cases, the individual is bound, by the traditions or lack of traditions of his class and by human nature and certain character traits, to act in a certain way.

In the plays, much the same aspects of the individual versus Fate are presented. Fate is represented by the law, the pounce of nature, the press, labor and capital, race, various social classes, idealism, and human character. Galsworthy's primary interest is in the individual's spiritual freedom and he calls attention to society's responsibility toward this end. "He has no 'ism to offer as a cure for all human ills. He sees men bound by class limitations - the poor by actual want, the rich by ignorance and prejudice - and he has found no remedy

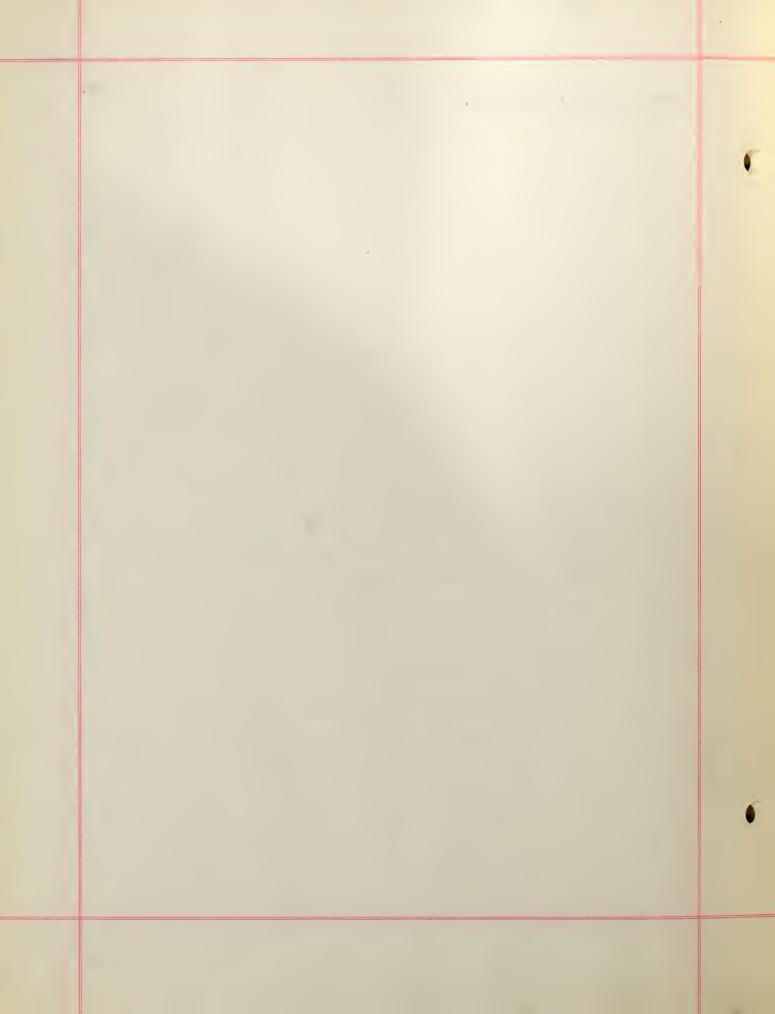
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The question of whether Galsworthy was a believer in free-will or in fatalism is pertinent to our problem. Are we all victims of Fate or do we have something to say about our lot? I think Galsworthy was a believer in free-will and that he greatly admired the individual who was a successful pioneer, the one out of a hundred. In his works, however, he limited himself to average persons, individuals who had freedom of will, but lacked the ability or the social environment to do what they wanted. Fate was not always unkind to these individuals, but in the majority of illustrations from his works, Fate seemed to be unfriendly. In most cases, the individual appeared to be beaten by Fate, though he may have been spiritually triumphant. All that Galsworthy has asked is that individuals be allowed spiritual freedom by a sympathetic society. He was first and last deeply interested in both the material and spiritual happi-

<sup>1.</sup> John W. Cunliffe, English Literature During the Last Half Century. p. 210.

<sup>2.</sup> Sheila Kaye-Smith, John Galsworthy.p.100. 3. Ibid. p. 113.

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